



Summer 2021

Como-Harriet Streetcar Line's 50th Anniversary





It began in 1970 with a single stall car barn tucked unobtrusively under the Linden Hills Boulevard bridge so hopefully the neighbors wouldn't take offense. From there a quarter mile of track was laid on the old right of way to 42nd Street.

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The Minnesota Streetcar Museum operates the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line in Minneapolis and the Excelsior Streetcar Line in Excelsior. Its mission is to preserve Minnesota's electric railway heritage.

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**Como-Harriet Line
celebrates 50 years**

August 28, 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of streetcar operations for the public on our reborn piece of the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. The credit goes to multiple generations of dedicated volunteers.

From a single streetcar, how we've grown. Now there are two streetcar lines, six restored cars with two more in waiting, two restoration shops, a depot, two retail stores, a library and a garden. Our 100+ volunteers have given over two million streetcar rides on regular service and an ever-growing list of special events. We've published five books, 233 Minnegazettes, 58 quarterly Twin City Lines history magazines and 154 Currents newsletters.

The public can view two dozen of our interpretive signs. We've established a solid online presence with a website, 2500+ photos in the Minnesota Digital Library, YouTube videos and frequent Facebook posts. We've catalogued almost 14,000 photos, drawings and small artifacts. With all that, we've been prudent managers and have emerged from the Covid pandemic in good financial shape.

A history of everything that has happened could fill a book, but in this issue we'll just share color photos of those first days.

What follows is a detailed chronology of everything we've accomplished, taken from the pages of the Minnegazette and Streetcar Currents.

So take a bow, everyone who worked so hard and provided so much support. 50 years is a remarkable achievement.



The MSM chronology

1962

1300 moved into Minnesota Transfer roundhouse, restoration begins
"Goat" power-supply-on-handcar built

1963

First operations at Minnesota Transfer May 11
11 operating days total 8919 rides

Operating site candidates studied: Minneapolis Anoka & Cuyuna Range, Como Park, across Como Avenue from State Fair, ADM elevator trackage near 29th & Elm SE

1965

Museum formally incorporated
Operating site candidates studied: Minnehaha Park, U of M Rosemount Research Station

1968

Steeple cab 20, crane and dump car from Main Steam Station acquired

1969

Park Board approves lease of Lake Harriet site

1970

CHSL groundbreaking April 18
First track laid
Carbarn erected
Minnegazette newsletter started
Steeplecab 20 scrapped for parts

Front cover: On August 28, 1971, with a modest amount of ceremony, the first public run of the reborn Como-Harriet Line crosses 42nd Street. There was no depot yet or overhead wire, and this was the end of track. But it was a start.



The first half of the line was laid the old fashioned way, by hand. The old TCRT ties and spikes were still in the ground.

1971

1300 moved to Lake Harriet
Rails reach depot site
August 28 first public operation
ROW surveyed to Berry Road

1972

Uniforms set
Track laid to Berry bridge
Big Island brochure printed

1973

Overhead wire erected
Steel TCRT overhead poles recovered from 5th Ave. N.-5th St. wye
Big Island brochure printed
78 and 265 acquired and moved to Como Shops
1300 HO gauge model produced
Power supply installed

1974

265 restoration begins
Depot passing siding installed
Wildwood Park brochure printed

1975

1300's trucks overhauled at Soo Line
Shoreham Shops
Depot garden created

1976

Car 1496 South St Paul "trolley church" purchased
Electric Railways of Minnesota published
Lake Calhoun extension begins
TCRT overhead wire truck acquired

1977

Calhoun extension track completed
Depot garden dedicated

1978

Two Chicago L cars acquired for parts
Mesaba 10 acquired

1979

Western extension to Upton Avenue contemplated, but idea dropped
Shop building constructed
Metro Transit establishes bus stop on Richfield Road by CHSL

1980

265 completed and moved to Lake Harriet
Body of streetcar 1508 stripped for parts
1300 on cover of Minneapolis phone directory
Steamboat Minnehaha salvaged from Lake Minnetonka

1981

Historic site plaque installed at 42nd Street
Minnegazette upgraded to magazine

1982

Como Shops vacated
Depot siding receives overhead wire; first 2-car operation
Belgian power truck for 78 acquired

1983

78 restoration begins

1984

New 1300 stepwell
CHSL "Ready Barn" expansion starts

1985

CHSL Ready Barn completed

1986

Speeder ETS1 completed
Twin Cities Today brochure printed

1987

First portion of TCRT employee appointment cards acquired

Car 1239 acquired

1988

1239 arrives at Jackson Street Roundhouse

1990

Linden Hills depot opened
Steamboat Minnehaha acquired
Original TCRT plan, streetcar seats donated to Minnehaha restoration
Member Conduct Code approved
CHSL security system installed
CHSL shop heaters installed
PCC cars 322 and 416 arrive from Cleveland

1991

78 restoration completed
322 moved into Metro Transit Overhaul Base for restoration
Steamboat Division acquires streetcar bodies 1809 and 1496

1992

1809 cosmetic restoration begins

1993

Stove for 78 installed
Excelsior trolley exhibit placed next to Historical Society
1809 cosmetic restoration complete
Motorettes 50th Reunion at CHSL
1 millionth passenger carried
CHSL wins Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Award
Russ Olson donates TCRT records to Minnesota Historical Society
Russ completed Electric Railways of Minnesota supplement

1994

ISTEA grant to build ESL approved
CHSL carbarn expansion ISTEA grant approved
Valley Fair gas trolleys acquired

1995

Twin City Lines-The 1940s published
New 1300 roof

1996

First MTM web site
Car 1809 moved near Minnehaha Dock
Steamboat Minnehaha maiden voyage
600-photo Bob Schumacher collection donated
Photo/artifact database created

1997

CHSL carbarn expansion completed
ESL track construction completed
322 moves to Lake Harriet
Como-Harriet Story booklet with advertising printed
First CHSL Halloween Ghost Trolley
Zalusky all-time TCRT transfer collection donated
43-photo Everett Jones collection donated
ISTEA grant approved for ESL Water Street loop

1998

Japanese streetcar trucks arrive
ESL starts service with ex-Valley Fair gas cars
Winona 10 discovered
Safety Zone sign donated
ESL carbarn completed

1999

265 renovation underway, receives Japanese trucks
1239 moved from Jackson Street to ESL
Winona 10 acquired, moved to ESL
ESL overhead wire erected
78 moved to ESL, starting ESL electric service May 22
ESL Water Street Loop plan abandoned

done
200 ties replaced at CHSL
Interior bulkheads salvaged from
Duluth car 195, making 1239 backdat-
ing possible

2000

ISTEA grant to rebuild CHSL track
approved
322 restoration completed
265 back in service
First edition of Como-Harriet
Currents newsletter

2001

900-photo Gene Corbey collection
donated
Minneapolis Historic Preservation
Award for PCC 322
First Season Passes sold
"Change at Excelsior" poster creat-
ed
Mesaba 10 moved from New
Brighton Arsenal to ESL
Valley Fair gas cars sold to Iowa
Trolley Park and Minnesota Zephyr

2002

Original TCRT bridge (Hwy. 7 off-
ramp) over ESL replaced
Como-Harriet book printed
476-photo Art Rusterholz collection
acquired.

2003

Fargo-Moorhead Birney 28 acquired

2004

MTM Traction Division takes over
ESL from Steamboat Division
Como-Harriet Currents renamed
Streetcar Currents
1239 restoration completed
Winona 10 restoration begins
\$284,000 raised as local share of
CHSL track rebuild project
CHSL track rebuild completed,
including restoration of pedestrian

underpass and Cottage City stop
New wood platform for Linden
Hills depot
First ESL Ghost Trolley

2005

MSM splits off from MTM
Minnegazette becomes joint
MSM/MTM history-only publication

2006

History signs installed along CHSL
1300 exterior wainscoting replaced
265's broken wheel replaced
MSM hosts ARM Spring Conference
Como-Harriet Streetcar Line poster
created by Rick Schuster
MSM online store opens
Pedestrian underpass lamp posts
installed
TCRT valuation reports, Zalusky
transfer collection acquired
ESL carbarn sprinkler system
installed
CHSL Holly Trolley begins

2007

George K. Isaacs Carbarn dedicated
MSM stops Minnegazette, starts
Twin City Lines magazine
Twin Cities by Trolley published
Front end repairs to 1300
89 Norm Podas photos and 61
Harold Dalland photos donated
First MSM photos on Minnesota
Digital Library
The rest of the TCRT employee
appointment cards donated by Metro
Transit
First Christkindlmarkt

2008

500 David Carlson Duluth nega-
tives, 78 Barney Olsen photos acquired
First ESL carbarn history displays
First Pumpkin Patch
TCRT overhead wire truck relocated
to Richfield Bus Co.

First Operations Newsletter

2009

TCRT 1909 system map poster
printed
PJ Party started
CHSL power supply upgraded
CHSL carbarn sprinklers installed
with security system upgrade
Jim Kreuzberger's Duluth streetcar
notes donated
62 John Stern photos acquired

2010

Frank Sandberg donates over 200
TCRT shop drawings
ESL starts Storytime Trolley
TCRT Employee Appointment cards
donated to Minnesota Historical
Society
Mesaba 16 stripped for parts, then
scrapped.
Surplus traction motors sold to
Edmonton Radial Railway Society
First Streetcar Camp
42nd Street grade crossing rebuilt
Brick apron laid in front of Isaacs
Carbarn
Dupont truck for Winona 10 arrives
Archival sleeving of photo collec-
tion begins

2011

Linden Hills depot platform
replaced and interior refurbished
Cottage City stop walkway com-
pleted
Jim Kreuzberger collection of books,
models, 550 photos and Duluth Street
Railway records donated
PCC 322 model produced
First Murder Mystery at CHSL

2012

First streetcar movies digitized
Isaacs carbarn electrical upgraded
Linden Hills depot benches
replaced

276-photo Norman Rolfe collection
purchased
First ESL North Pole Trolley

2013

CHSL restroom installed
All car cards scanned and stored;
copies placed in streetcars
Isaacs Carbarn expansion project
starts
ESL installs display in Excelsior vis-
itor center

2014

New Point of Sale system for Linden
Hills depot takes credit cards for the
first time
Video screen in Linden Hills depot
Twin Ports by Trolley published
First streetcar musical performed
ShiftPlanning used for crew assign-
ments
New window shades for 265 and
1239
100+ photos from UMD, Douglas
County Historical Society acquired
First Vinternatt

2015

Isaacs carbarn expansion (library,
machine shop, speeder shed) complet-
ed
265 renovation complete
Fence erected along Queen Avenue
by Linden Hills depot
Granite paver crosswalk installed at
ESL Water Street stop
Website makeover
Position of Volunteer Coordinator
established
Duluth Street Railway records
donated to UMD

2016

265 receives 12-volt converter to
charge battery, LED ditch lights, start-
stop control safety sensors
Russ Olson donates his research

papers

Russell L. Olson Library dedicated
Selby Tunnel history sign installed
above the tunnel

Linden Hills depot repainted, new
roof, rotted wood replaced

New air compressors for shops
donated

1300's truck rebuild begins

2017

MSM hosts HeritageRail Alliance
Fall conference

Streetcar history seminars posted on
YouTube

ESL car barn receives concrete floor
ESL car barn electrical service
upgraded

Speeder shed track installed
Isaacs car barn brick apron relaid
Winona 10 first revenue trips
Twin Cities Streetcars in Color pub-
lished

2018

1300 truck overhaul completed
Fiber internet service installed at
CHSL

Anti-graffiti fencing on east side of
Isaacs car barn

Major makeover of ESL car barn
store and display area

Winona 10 dedication
All Minnegazettes digitized

Lakewood Cemetery platform con-
structed

Car swap: 265 to ESL, 1239 to CHSL
Weekly Facebook history posts
begin

2019

New trucks for 1239 project begins
New point of sale (POS) system

1300's lights rewired
New basement steps at Linden Hills
depot

All 3-dimensional artifacts in the
Olson Library catalogued

Fargo-Moorhead 28 moved from
Ken Albrecht's farm

Baker heater for 1239 delivered
All-Motorette crews at ESL and
CHSL

1300 and Winona 10 motor failures

2020

ESL overhead wire realignment
Covid shuts down all streetcar opera-
tions, CHSL shop closed until June,
ESL shop closed all year.

Book scanner installed in Olson
Library

1950s Como-Harriet video complet-
ed and posted on YouTube

Facebook presence expands to at
least 3 posts per week

Kids Clubs organized, with atten-
dant newsletters and videos

Electrical control panels in Isaacs
car barn upgraded

200 ties replaced at CHSL
ESL car barn gets anti-graffiti fenc-
ing

2 millionth passenger carried

2021

CHSL overhead wire realignment
and pole replacement

Car 78 controllers rebuilt
Streetcar history signs installed
along 44th Street right of way

1239 backdated to 1921, including
Baker heater installation

History Powerpoint series posted
on YouTube

Jib crane installed in Isaacs car barn
machine shop

Video security cameras installed at
Isaacs car barn

Post-Covid streetcar operations
start July 2

50th Anniversary of CHSL August
28

Winona motorman's memories

*This story appeared in the Winona
newspaper in 1969.*

A young employee at Watkins
Products, Inc., back in the 1920s, H.
Glen Berry frequently would look out
a window at the plant, watch the elec-
tric streetcars rumbling along the East
Third Street tracks and think to him-
self, "Running one of those things
looks like it would be a pretty good
job."

Today, as the senior bus driver for
Winona Transit Co., Berry is the only
Winonan actively engaged in public
transportation whose career spans two
eras of transit operations.

He's the only member of that corps
of streetcar motormen who in the late
1930s left the wicker seats of the old
"rattlers" to climb behind the steering
wheel of one of the new buses that
were making their first appearance on
Winona streets, who is still regularly
engaged in transportation service.

In the going on 43 years since Berry
walked into the office of the old
Winona Railway and Light Company

to apply for placement on the firm's
list of extra motormen for call-up duty,
he's probably carried some 4 million or
more people — on streetcars and buses
— to and from work in Winona, on
shopping trips to school and to various
entertainment activities.

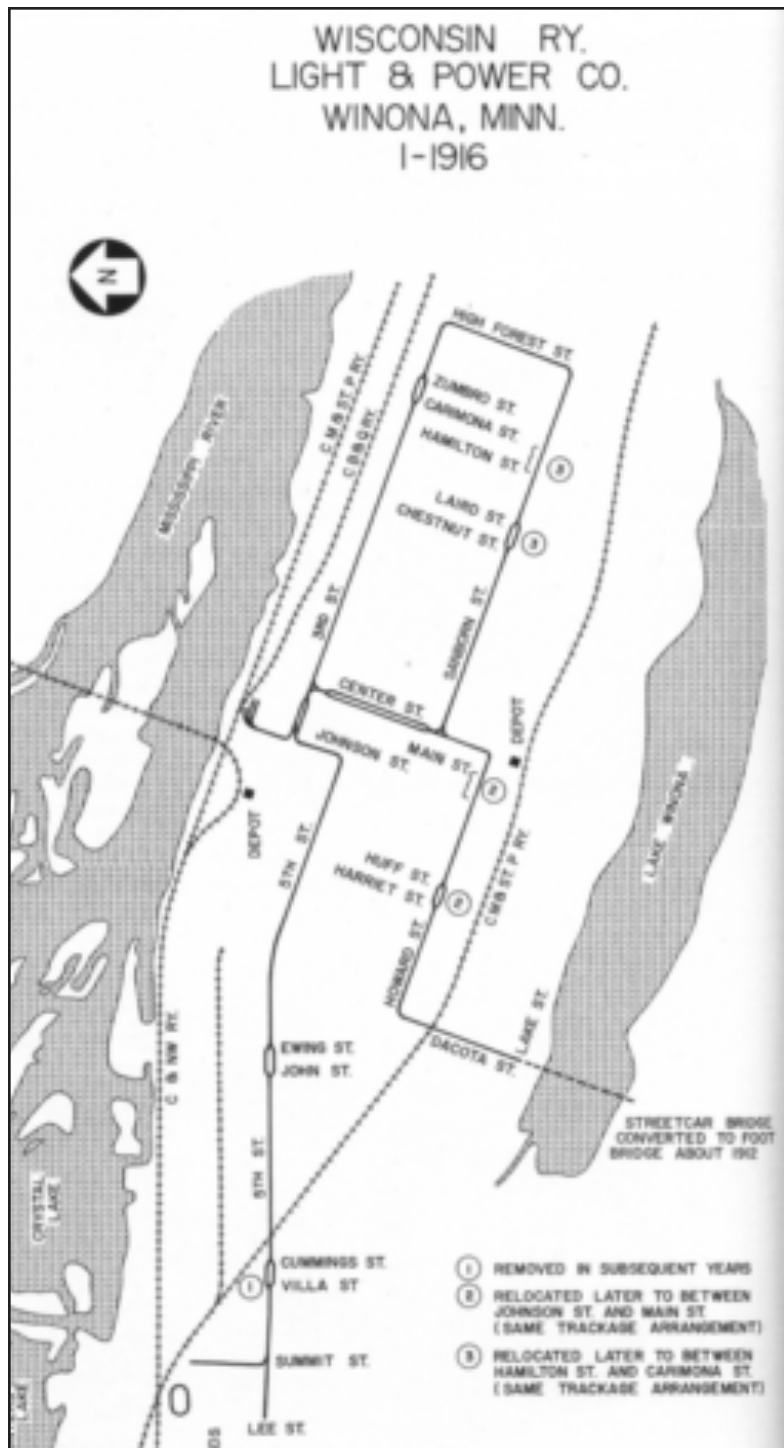
It's almost a certainty that since
public transit was introduced in
Winona no one has been employed
continuously in transportation longer
than Berry whose career covers rough-
ly half the total period of the city's
transit service history.

And, nearly a half a century after he
watched the streetcars go by the
Watkins plant he still feels employ-
ment in the transit service is "a good
job; it's interesting and the best part of
it is in the number of people you come
in contact with every day."

Winona's transit system was 43
years old when Berry signed on as an
extra streetcar motorman in October of
1926. The first street railway system
had been established on Christmas
Day in 1883 when a horse-drawn car
made its inaugural run from the
Winona Street Railway Company sta-
bles at East Third Street and Mankato



Winona's trainmen pose in 1927. Glen Berry is second from right in the front row.
Winona County Historical Society collection.



Above: The motorman swings the trolley pole around at 5th and Hilbert, west end of the Main Line. It was cut back two blocks from Lee Street to Hilbert Street in 1933. The last streetcar quit in 1938.

Below: Car 11, sister to our Winona #10, inside the carbarn. Both Frank Butts photos.



Avenue to the Winona Wagon Works on West Fifth Street.

The system's facilities then included stables to accommodate 36 horses and an adjacent carhouse for 14 cars. Operations were started with eight new carriages manufactured in St. Louis and some iron scrapers devised to clear the path for the cars during the winter months. Horsecars were used here for about a decade until modernization prompted construction of a power system and trackage for an electric street railway that began service in the winter of 1892.

When Berry donned his motorman's hat there were two lines in Winona. The Main Line ran from Lee Street, near the present location of Jefferson School, east on Fifth Street to Johnson, up Johnson to Third Street and east on Third Street to High Forest, south on High Forest to East Sanborn Street and then west on Sanborn to Center.

The Lake Line extended from West Howard and Dakota streets east to Center, north on Center to Third Street. At the Center Street terminating points, return trips were then made along the same routes.

For the return run the motorman simply reversed the position of the trolley by swinging it around, using a rope hanging from the trolley pole, removed his controls and fare box from one end of the car and installed them in the other and reversed the position of the passenger seat backs.

At one time the west line had an extension across Lake Winona at Dakota Street with a wooden bridge carrying cars across the lake to a point near Woodlawn Cemetery. During the years the trip across the lake was being made the company for a period showed free outdoor movies at the terminal across the lake as a device to stimulate patronage.

There usually was a lineup of



youngsters waiting at the north end of the lake as the streetcar approached and if the motorman was in a good mood and there were few passengers on the car he'd often provide the children with a free ride across the lake.

There were a series of accidents involving the young free riders and when a streetcar was struck by a train at the Dakota Street crossing, resulting in the deaths of three persons, service across the lake was discontinued.

The Lake Line's trestle across the lake was converted to a footbridge about 1912, but the shortened line kept running until 1933. Both Winona County Historical Society collection.

When Berry was accepted as a prospective motorman he was given four hours of training in the operation of the streetcar and for familiarization with the routes, then was signed on as an extra employee to be called in when a regular motorman was unable to report for duty.

"I think I started out at 48 cents an hour," he says, "but the pay was raised a couple of cents a year or so later."

At that time the fare was 6 cents for adults and 3 cents for children with tokens for adult fares available at 16 for a dollar.

Some of the more difficult days experienced by bus drivers today are during periods of heavy winter snow and icing, just as they were during the era of the streetcars, Berry observes.

"We had one trolley unit equipped with a big revolving brush that was



A streetcar lays over between trips on the Center Street double track, transfer point between the Main Line and the Lake Line. The Center Street track and the Lake Line were abandoned in 1933.

operated by one man over the entire route to remove snow from the tracks after a snowstorm," he recalls. "Sometimes, especially in the outlying areas, the snow would blow back in drifts and then we'd just have to try to punch our way through. We'd back up a short distance, then go ahead, back up again and go ahead and try to break through the drifts. If we really got hung up then the only thing to do was call in for help."

Ice was a serious and more frequently encountered problem. A sand spreading device was installed on all streetcars to drop sand on the tracks when traction on the steel rails became difficult and other devices had to be developed to cope with the icing problem.

For the streetcar motorman cold weather brought an extra duty — providing heat for the passengers.

Each streetcar had a coke-burning stove at the rear with a blower fan assembly attached to circulate the heat through the car.

"Every morning during the winter before you started out," Berry recalls, "you had to get a fire going in the heater and then it had to be kept fired up during the rest of the day.

"Sometimes you'd be busy and forget the fire for a time and it would go out. Then you'd really have a job on your hands when you reached the end of the line and in the couple of minutes before heading back you'd have to scratch up some kindling and get that fire going again."

"I remember one time when I was put on duty all night at a time when water had collected in the streets and was freezing," Berry says. "It was my job to run the car back and forth over the entire system through the night to keep thick ice from forming. The wheels would break up the ice on the tracks before it got a chance to get real-

ly solid and that way we were able to keep the lines open for the next day's runs."

In addition to providing transportation for Winona residents, the streetcars were a constant source of entertainment for enterprising youths who sought out different methods of disengaging the trolley from the overhead line which provided the electric power necessary for the car's operation. Another favorite practice was for boys to crowd into the rear end of the car en masse so that their weight would lift the front wheels of the streetcar off the tracks.

Motormen, Berry recalls, more or less resigned themselves to these stratagems but not infrequently a motorman whose patience was wearing a little thin would bring the car to an abrupt halt, leap from his seat and give chase down the street to a group of miscreants who had been trying to snap the trolley off the wire or who had been shagging rides on the rear of the car.

Halloween, of course, was looked forward to by streetcar operators with something less than enthusiasm.

"On Halloween," Berry remembers, "an off-duty man was assigned to each car to take a spot at the rear and act as a guard. There was one Halloween when I was out near the end of the line and the trolley was pulled loose. The rope hanging from the pole snapped up and twisted around the wire so I had to climb up on top of the car and try to unwind the rope. I was up there unwinding the rope and trying to keep from coming in contact with the power line when this bunch of kids came out and started pelting me with eggs."

The motormen had their moments, too, though, according to Berry. He recalls one Halloween when a fellow motorman was driving along the street and a youth dashed out with a fire

extinguisher filled with water and scored a direct hit on the operator's face.

"The motorman happened to live right on the streetcar line on East Sanborn Street," Berry continues, "so he continued his run but when they got to his house he told the man riding guard with him to watch the car a minute while he went into his house. He came back with a pail of water, they continued on down the line and when they reached the spot where he'd been squirted the same kid came out again with the fire extinguisher. This time, before the kid had a chance to squirt him, the motorman reached out and let him have the whole pail of water. He didn't have any more trouble with that kid that night."

In those years when every family didn't have one or more cars the public depended to a great extent on the transit system for transportation and Berry remembers "we really used to pack them in those days."

During the peak rush hours when people were going to and from work, extra cars were placed in operation and "double-headers" — one car following immediately behind another — were common.

"The big rush was for the North Western Railway shops," Berry says, "and when the men were going to work we'd probably be carrying 80 or 90 in a car. A lot of them would get off the streetcar at West Fifth Street and then walk up the tracks to where they were working."

In the early days a circus, baseball game or some other community event would tax the transit system to its limit. On those occasions special open trailers were attached to the streetcars and towed along behind to accommodate the surge of passengers. From time to time the trailers would jump the tracks at a switch and then the pas-

sengers would all climb off, lift the trailer back on the tracks and resume the trip.

The streetcar era came to an end in 1938 when Mississippi Valley Public Service Company — which earlier had absorbed Winona Railway and Light Company — replaced the electric trolleys with motor buses. The transition from trolley to bus operation, Berry says, wasn't too difficult for those motormen who owned cars.

"Each of us was given some instruction in how to operate the bus and then we drove it up and down Broadway until we had the feel of it," he explains. "There was one of the men who didn't own a car and just couldn't get the hang of it and the company let him retire."

Constant contacts with the public for nearly 43 years have convinced Berry that, by and large, people haven't changed too much over the past four decades.

"As a whole the public always has been pretty good to deal with," he observes. "Oh, once in a while you run into a grouch but usually people are good to get along with."

Fares and the Brooks-Coleman Act

-Aaron Isaacs

Streetcar companies didn't just set up shop and start building lines. They needed a franchise from whatever city they were in. The franchise was a two-edged sword. In exchange for the exclusive right to run streetcars, the company submitted to city approval of routes, fares and attendant requirements such as paving the track area, plowing snow and sprinkling streets. This set up an endless conflict, with the cities lobbying for more service than the company thought could be

run profitably.

Nothing resulted in a bigger fight than fares. When the first horsecars appeared in the 1870s, the fare was 5 cents, with no free transfers. The cities forced free transfers over the company's objections in the 1880s, clearly the right thing to do in order to provide a good public service.

The nickel fare persisted because the economy was actually deflationary through 1899 when the value of an 1870 nickel peaked at 8 cents. Inflation began to erode it, but it wasn't until 1918 that it fell below its 1870 value. World War I brought on unprecedented inflation. By 1920 a nickel's value had dropped to 3.4 cents. TCRT was worried about its financial viability and was lobbying for a fare increase. That swam against the current of public and political opinion. The nickel fare was a sacred cow.

The City of Minneapolis franchise was scheduled to expire in 1923. TCRT and city staff had been negotiating a new franchise since about 1916 and reached a compromise in 1919. However, it had to be submitted to the voters for approval. It was voted down.

Now back to square one, TCRT President Horace Lowry knew that a revised franchise acceptable to the voters would be even more costly, at the same time that inflation was eating away at fare revenue.

The situation worsened in 1921 when ridership declined for the first time ever, coming off the World War I boom. Although no one knew it at the time, ridership would continue to drop every year until 1934. Yet the city was insisting on line extensions that would grow track mileage by a third. TCRT had to sell bonds to finance the construction, but argued that no one would buy their paper with the franchise in limbo.

It was clear to TCRT that future fare increases required some political distance. Local politicians and voters were never going to be sympathetic and often actively hated the company. In their view the overcrowded streetcars were proof that the company was ripping off the public.

The cities were not about to permit further fare increases, so TCRT went to the state legislature for relief. They successfully lobbied to shift fare regulation to the Minnesota Railroad & Warehouse Commission. The legislature delivered even more. On April 29, 1921, it passed the Brooks-Coleman Act. It provided that streetcar companies would operate under permits of indeterminate length granted by the state, rather than city franchises with a finite term. If the cities wanted to reassert full authority, they could only do it by bringing the streetcars under municipal ownership. The Minnesota Railroad and Warehouse Commission was given exclusive power and authority to establish rates of fare and exercise control over suburban portions outside the city limits; the individual city councils retained control over operations and routing of car lines; no changes in routes or schedules were to be made without council permission.

Not surprisingly, the cities were adamantly opposed to the Brooks-Coleman law, arguing that it was an unlawful usurping of home rule. They lobbied unsuccessfully for its repeal every year through 1930. They took it to the State Supreme Court to get it declared unconstitutional, but the court ruled against them.

The Minneapolis fare was raised to 6 cents, then 8 cents in 1925 and 10 cents in 1929. Tokens could be purchased at a discount, reducing the financial impact on riders. The dime fare lasted until 1948.

The Neutral Zone

Most readers of this magazine are probably aware that any streetcar rider crossing the city limits between Minneapolis and St. Paul had to pay a second fare. TCRT's subsidiaries, Minneapolis Street Railway and St. Paul City Railway, had separate franchise agreements with their respective cities. Those agreements required a full fare be paid for a streetcar ride in each city. The extra revenue was a good deal for TCRT, since four of its lines (University Avenue, Como-Harriet, Selby-Lake and Fort Snelling) connected the two downtowns.

However, from 1890 until 1922, there was an exception to the double fare. It was called the Neutral Zone. Any passenger from Minneapolis could travel into St. Paul as far as Snelling Avenue for a single fare. Meanwhile, any ride within St. Paul also cost a single fare. The two single fare zones overlapped by about two miles. It's unclear how this originated, but it appears to have started when the Interurban on University Avenue connected the downtowns for the first time in 1890.

The beneficiary was the Midway District, which in 1890 was mostly open country. It quickly filled with industry and became a major employment center, drawing workers from both cities. In newspaper stories, the Neutral Zone is credited for encouraging the Midway's development. A TCRT ad from 1919 makes that claim, although it also complains that the zone cost it \$300,000 of lost revenue each year.

At some unknown date the eastern zone boundary was moved west a half mile to Fairview Avenue. That changed in 1905, when it shifted back to Snelling. This was one provision of a much larger agreement between

TCRT and the City of St. Paul that settled the company's tax burden. The agreement opened the door to a series of service improvements, including two new intercity lines on Lake Street/Marshall Avenue and via Fort Snelling. The Neutral Zone extension to Snelling coincided with the opening of the city's first crosstown line on Snelling Avenue and included free transfers to that line.

As a streetcar passed through the Neutral Zone, it was a challenge for conductors to decide which fare to charge. Fareboxes didn't appear until about 1920. Passengers boarded and took their seats before the conductor passed through the car to collect fares by hand. We know from an old rule book that intercity fares were collected in two transactions. A TCRT newspaper ad from 1921 said "Passengers boarding in Neutral Zone will pay as they enter and receive identification checks which they will surrender to the conductor on leaving car." We don't know if zone checks were issued in earlier years.

As World War I approached, TCRT began to lobby hard against the 5 cent fare. The cities had to approve any fare increase and the nickel fare was untouchable. It had been in effect since the start of operations in 1872. Even though inflation was modest in those days, by 1920, a nickel fare was worth 3.4 cents. Dependent on farebox revenue to fund operations plus system expansion, streetcar systems everywhere lobbied for fare increases.

In 1920 the Minneapolis City Council approved what called an "emergency" increase to 6 cents. As part of the Minneapolis deal, TCRT agreed to raise wages by 10 cents per hour and plow the additional revenues into line extensions and more service. St. Paul initially rejected any fare increase, so now the two cities had two

different fares.

TCRT decided to play hard ball. On August 15, 1920 it announced that the four intercity lines would be broken at the city limits, with cars no longer running through and passengers forced to transfer. It made the point that it wouldn't administer two different wages for trainmen depending on how many hours they spent in each city. If St. Paul approved the 6 cent fare, streetcar company wages in St. Paul would rise by 10 cents.

Furthermore, TCRT announced that the Neutral Zone would be eliminated, because of the lost revenue, and because it amounted to Minneapolis subsidizing St. Paul. The initial response of the St. Paul City Council was to stonewall TCRT. According to the newspaper, "The City Council members...refuse any increase in the rate of fare until the company improves service. Service cannot be improved unless men are paid better salaries, the company has informed officials." In a case of management and labor working together, the St. Paul trainmen threatened to strike unless the fare increase was approved.

TCRT backed off its threat to split the lines and began negotiating with the City of St. Paul. Both agreed to keep the Neutral Zone in effect for the 6 cent Minneapolis fare until October 1. From an accounting standpoint, TCRT decided to divide the cost and revenues of the four intercity lines 50-50 between the two cities. Meanwhile the threat of a St. Paul strike remained.

The St. Paul City Council folded on August 20, 1920, approving the fare increase, which took effect September 13. They threatened to eliminate the Neutral Zone, arguing that it created an incentive for St. Paul residents to shop in Minneapolis. As a face saver, they required TCRT to add streetcars to reduce overcrowding. TCRT imme-

diately increased wages by a penny and the strike threat was called off.

The threat by St. Paul to eliminate the Neutral Zone put them at odds with the Minneapolis City Council that wanted it to remain in place. According to the *Star-Tribune*, "Hundreds of Minneapolis workers ride into the industrial district in the Midway every day, and the payment of an extra fare twice a day would be prohibitive." Midway employers lobbied the St. Paul City Council to keep the zone.

On August 29 it was announced that all parties had agreed to retain the Neutral Zone. Among the reasons given was to avoid confusion during the State Fair, which was located in the zone. The *Star-Tribune* quoted TCRT General Passenger Agent W. O. Clure's recap of the zone's history. "When the company established the zone some 30 years ago, it was with the idea of bringing the cities closer together and to build up the district itself...When the zone was first established the Midway district was nothing but a wilderness."

Because of the separate city franchises, fare revenues to the Minneapolis Street Railway and the St. Paul City Railway were segregated from one another, not pooled by Twin City Rapid Transit. Cross-subsidizing was not supposed to happen, but separating the money required certain assumptions and those could be controversial. One of St. Paul's arguments for eliminating the Neutral Zone was that it was losing \$211,000 annually because passengers from Minneapolis didn't pay a second fare.

1920 was the peak ridership year with 238.4 million passengers. Ridership dropped by 4.5 percent in 1921, beginning what would be a long continuous decline that would bottom out in 1933. Meanwhile, TCRT was

required to add new lines and was feeling the financial pinch.

On New Years Day 1922, TCRT announced that the Neutral Zone would be eliminated one week later. This was accompanied by a 12 percent pay reduction for trainmen. City officials, Midway businesses and residents, labor groups and the State Fair cried foul. They demanded the return of the 5 cent fare. TCRT responded that it was making the change to "avoid ultimate bankruptcy". When St. Paul went to Ramsey County court for a restraining order to preserve the Neutral Zone, the judge ruled for TCRT. He said, "The fact cannot be lost that the neutral zone constitutes discrimination in favor of this large and rapidly growing district (the Midway) and that all the people of the city should not be penalized by an unnecessary increase in fares in order to permit its continuance."

On January 7, 1922 the Neutral Zone was gone. The Minneapolis Star reported that hundreds of workers from Minneapolis got off at the city limits and walked the rest of the way to their jobs. Employers banded together with the intention of hiring buses to shuttle workers to and from the city limits. It's not clear if that ever happened.

There were last minute attempts to restore the Neutral Zone. A state representative unsuccessfully petitioned the Railroad & Warehouse Commission. Proponents of the zone, having lost in Ramsey County Court, appealed to the State Supreme Court, which upheld the lower court in a 3-2 vote.

There was a bit of silliness by TCRT, which insisted on discharging passengers at the literal city limit in the middle of the Lake Street bridge. Eventually it was agreed that passengers from either city could alight at the far end of the bridge without paying

an extra fare.

In 1927 when the East 25th Street line was extended across the Mississippi River on the Ford Parkway bridge, all parties agreed not to require a second fare to reach the Highland Park Ford Plant.

Neutral Zone reborn decades later

The double fare between Minneapolis and St. Paul persisted even after the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) purchased Twin City Lines in 1970. The MTC was a 7-county metro agency and municipal control under the old franchises was voided. Public subsidies were now available and the goal shifted from profitability to increasing ridership.

Under the old franchises, fares were based on city boundaries. This produced results that seemed nonsensical, and inconsistencies abounded. Most notorious was the double fare between Minneapolis and St. Paul. There were zone charges to travel from the central city to any suburb. Minneapolis and St. Paul are both oblong in shape, so it was two miles before entering Golden Valley or West St. Paul, but six miles to Richfield or Brooklyn Center. As a regional system, something had to be done to make the fares more consistent.

MTC implemented the Concentric Circle Fare Plan in 1973. The new Fare Zone 1 extended six miles from the downtowns, based on the distance from downtown Minneapolis to the Richfield city limits at 62nd and Nicollet Avenue. Suburban fare zones were established every two miles.

The sticking point was the fare between Minneapolis and St. Paul, because the downtowns are 10 miles apart. The Commissioners couldn't swallow the staff recommendation for a single zone encompassing both cities, feeling there would be too much

lost revenue. The awkward (and ultimately unworkable) compromise was a zone fare for anyone traveling between the cities, but only if they went beyond that six-mile line. The 6-mile lines from each downtown overlapped by 2 miles, creating what came to be called the "football zone" because of its shape. It was the exact reincarnation of the Neutral Zone, extending east to Snelling Avenue. It required drivers to issue a zone check upon entering the football, then stop the bus at the far end of the zone and walk back through the bus to collect the either the zone check or the zone fare. This was highly unpopular with the drivers, who risked being assaulted. After a couple of years the intercity zone charge was abandoned, to everyone's relief. At long last both cities were completely within the base fare zone.

Cow versus streetcar

Minneapolis Tribune July 6, 1908

Fourth of July picnickers at White Bear Lake did not reach St. Paul until 3 o'clock yesterday, because a muley cow bucked one of the street cars off the tracks, got itself entangled in the trucks and was ground into hamburger steak for its obstinacy. The street car was loaded with passengers who were tossed about unceremoniously and greatly frightened. The car was so packed, however, that the passengers simply fell against each other and none were injured, except a few who complained of slight jolts against the seats. The trucks of the car were so entangled with the beef that they could not be readjusted and it was two hours before relief came from the barn and the belated passengers were transferred to new cars and backed into the city.

Growing up on the streetcar system

-Steve Legler

I especially enjoyed the latest winter edition of the MSM magazine as it was devoted to the car line I grew up on as a kid from 1945 to 1953, Bryant Ave. So. We did not own a car. We lived in an apartment in the 3600 block of S. Colfax, in a "transit-oriented development" area, long before it became a buzzword. I spent a lot of time riding the street cars, especially the Bryant-Johnson line.

At the corner of 36th and Bryant there were two small grocery stores, a hardware store, a drug store and a café, all within easy walking distance of home and the streetcar line. From 1948 to 1950, my great aunt and uncle lived in the 5600 block of S. Bryant, right next to the wye and the end of the car line. So for those years, we enjoyed a one-seat ride from our home to theirs.

In my earliest years, my dad rode the streetcars downtown and transferred to a bus to reach his job at the Twin City Ordnance plant in New Brighton. When the Ordnance plant closed, he rode to and from jobs at hotels in downtown Minneapolis, at all hours of the day and night. He frequently worked 11PM to 7AM. In those days, you didn't need to worry about a schedule except between midnight and 5AM, due to the high frequency of service.

My mother rode the cars to and from her secretarial jobs in downtown Minneapolis. When I started nursery school at Calhoun School in 1949 (at Lake and Hennepin on the present site of Calhoun Square), we would ride the Bryant line to Lake Street and transfer to a Selby-Lake car to the end of the line at Girard. We never had to worry



Above: A Bryant car reaches the end of the line at 56th Street. Mike Raia collection.

about waiting for a Bryant car, as they ran every two minutes in rush hour. Occasionally, the Selby-Lake cars would get delayed and bunched as they were coming all the way from downtown St. Paul. After dropping me off, my mother would get on a Como or Oak-Harriet car to downtown. In the afternoon, we reversed this process. Calhoun school was considered "walking distance" from our home (one mile), but we always rode the streetcars. By the time I was in 2nd grade, I was allowed to ride home alone on the streetcar! Minneapolis was very safe in those days, a far cry from what we see today.

Though there were no public timetables, my recollection is that at least in the late 40s and early 50s, the headway on Bryant was every five minutes in midday, with rotating trips to Bryant/50th, Bryant/56th, and 54th/Penn. The southbound cars ending at 50th/Bryant carried a Bryant-Johnson sign. My Dad complained that they should have had a Bryant to 50th sign, as people didn't know how

far a southbound "Bryant-Johnson" was going. Rush hour headways were as good as every two minutes, with most cars to Bryant/56th, and fewer to 54th/Penn due to the single track on Penn. As I recall, there were no short-line cars to Bryant/50th in rush hours, presumably because it was too congested and too high frequency to wye cars at 50th/Bryant in rush hours. John Dillery told me that he heard that during WWII, there were shortlines at 38th/Bryant, creating a 1 minute headway north of there. I'm sure that the cutbacks of the Ossanna era reduced the midday frequency to 10 minutes. I know that at bus conversion in 1953, it

was a 10-minute midday headway, as they published a public timetable. TCRT began publishing schedules on the bus routes when I was a kid, and I began collecting them.

When my uncle lived at 56th/Bryant, he worked at the main office of the Standard Oil Co. at 13th/Harmon, and rode the Bryant line. He told me that the streetcar company had asked Standard Oil if they could stagger their work hours, because it was so hard to get on a southbound streetcar at 13th/Hennepin in the PM peak. I don't think they did. In the mid-50s, Standard Oil moved their office to the

Below: To attend Calhoun School, Steve took a Bryant car to Lake Street, transferred to a Selby-Lake and got off at Girard, beyond the streetcar in this photo looking east from Lake and Hennepin.



new Prudential Building on Wayzata Blvd. near Wirth Parkway. That was the end of my uncle's transit riding; he formed a carpool. Sad.

In 1950, I had polio and was at Elizabeth Kenny Institute at 18th/Chicago (now the Detox center, I believe). After my release, I had to go there for follow up exams and therapy. On those days, I would ride with my mother on the Bryant line to downtown, she would give her transfer to my dad who had just gotten off work, and I would ride a Chicago car with him to Kenny, and then back home. That saved them 15 cents. I thank the Lord I had no long-term effects from polio.

My dad was somewhat of a transit fan, and he always felt there were too many autos on the streets. He never owned a car after 1940, when a tree fell on his car in a storm. I remember some funny experiences with him on street cars.

I was on a northbound Bryant car with him when two autos collided at Lyndale and Franklin, blocking the tracks. We got off the streetcar to have a look, and one guy said to my dad, "you were driving the blue car, right?" My dad replied, "Hell no, I was on a streetcar".

Toward the end of the gate-car era, I wanted to ride a gate car, and I made my dad wait at 31st/Hennepin with me for a Como gate car to come along. It seemed like a long time, but was probably only 15-20 minutes.

On another occasion, I wanted to go to Nicollet carbarn to look around, so my dad took me there. I was intrigued by the storage track configuration, which was almost all outside. When we got back home, I was talking about the interesting array of tracks at the carbarn. To irritate my mother, my dad said, maybe we could draw the Nicollet tracks in chalk here on the



Above: The trip to the Elizabeth Kenny Institute for polio treatments required a transfer at 8th and Hennepin from the Bryant car to the Chicago Avenue car, shown here boarding passengers. Norton & Peel photo.

Below: Steve and his dad experienced a similar backup on Lyndale at Franklin. Star-Tribune photo, MHS collection.





Above: Steve was intrigued by the tracks leading into the Nicollet Station yard. Norman Rolfe photo.

Below: Passengers returning from the State Fair to Minneapolis boarded at a long open shed on the west side of the streetcar loop. John Runk photo, MHS collection.

rug. That didn't happen.

My dad would take me to the State Fair on the streetcar. Upon leaving, I would pressure him to wait in order to watch several streetcars load before

boarding one to go home. Of course, they were leaving about every two minutes.

I remember going to the Shrine Circus at the Minneapolis Auditorium



Returning from the Shrine Circus at the Minneapolis Auditorium, Steve boarded a special Bryant car at Grant and Marquette. Star-Tribune photo, MHS collection.

(Grant and Marquette). In addition to Nicollet and Grand-Monroe cars, TCRT would time an extra SB car on Marquette to meet the break of the circus with a Bryant-Johnson sign, going via Nicollet, Lake and Bryant.

In 1952, my aunt and uncle lived at 39th & Drew. The 39th Street shuttle bus wye'd at 39th/Chowen, and connected with Oak/Como-Harriet cars at 43rd/Upton, via 39th and Sheridan. Or, you could get off the car at the bridge (now William Berry Pkwy.), and make a pleasant walk through the park over to 39th/Sheridan to catch the shuttle bus. One day I was at my aunt and uncle's house, and my mother was coming to join us, riding a streetcar. She called to tell us that the Como-Harriet car she was on had derailed in the curve at 31st/Irving, turning into the private right of way. My uncle and I got in his '49 Hudson and went down to pick her up, and watched the crew working to re-rail the car. Fortunately, the northbound track was not blocked, so those cars were able to squeeze by.

I remember with sadness the conversion to buses between 1952-54,

although I later became a bus fan as well, which led to my transit career of 47 years, ending with 23 years at Metro Transit. I remember riding my bike by 42nd and Queen at Lake Harriet in the summer of 1954, and watching the trucks come down the right-of-way, removing the overhead wire.

We moved in 1953 from the apartment on the Bryant line, to a house on Chowen Avenue between Lake Street and Cedar Lake Ave., and went from riding streetcars to riding mostly buses, on the Kenwood-St. Louis Park line and the Hennepin-France shuttle, before and after bus route numbers. St. Louis Park was growing, and the headway on the new 14 line was as good as every three minutes in the rush hour, and the buses (mostly Macks) were very crowded.

In those days, I recall that rush hour buses seemed much more crowded than the streetcars had been, which was probably true because of their lower capacity. In the Ossanna era, TCRT rushed to convert as fast as possible, and bought many used buses to supplement the new GMCs. Many were slow, stick-shift White buses,



Above: Steve's mother was delayed by a derailment at 31st and Irving, where the Como-Harriet entered private right of way. Ed Nelson photo.

Below: A Kenwood Mack bus on France Avenue at 29th Street.



vate company as long as they did. They had many charters for U of M football games, on which they used the newest GMC buses. So many, in fact, that the "lighter" lines, such as Kenwood-St. Louis Park, used older Mack buses on Saturday game days, with an 8-10 midday headway.

On the opening day of Southdale in 1956, my aunt and uncle lived at 54th/France. The France leg of Route 6 had a 20-minute midday headway, but only every third bus went to Southdale (every hour). Fortunately, I was able to squeeze onto a south-bound Southdale bus at 54th to get to the opening, as the bus was that crowded.

Our family was one which did not abandon the transit system and move to the suburbs in the 50s, and we lived through the deterioration of service that happened with bus conversion. I wish that the heavier lines could have remained as rail, with preferential treatment on streets, especially Como-Harriet with its long private right-of-way. It is interesting that the inauguration of the Hiawatha LRT line occurred in June 2004, 50 years after the last streetcar ran in Minneapolis.

At Metro Transit, I delayed my retirement until 2014, to be there for the startup of the Green Line LRT between downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul. The running time for the modern LRT line is not much different than that of the inter-urban Minneapolis-St. Paul streetcar line with PCC cars in the late 40s! Of course, the Green Line has more deviations than did the streetcar line, e.g., between 25th and 29th Avenues SE, and via Robert Street.

It was fun growing up in Minneapolis in the post-World War 2 era, and for me, the streetcar system was a big part of it.

plus Macks. The contrast in ride comfort between the smooth, spacious PCC cars and the cramped, bumpy, jerky buses (especially the Whites) was obvious. I believe this is the reason that the annual percentage loss in ridership was greater after bus conversion than it was while streetcars were still running.

I remember in the mid-late 50s traffic congestion was getting worse and worse, and bus service was getting more unreliable. My relatives who relied on transit regularly complained about the service, much more than in the streetcar era, a regular phrase being, "those darn, old buses!". Twin City Lines did a lot of charter work, prior to federal funding and federal charter regulations, which probably contributed to their surviving as a pri-

More TCRT ad graphics

The Fall 2020 issue included some samples of TCRT's newspaper advertising from the 1920s, 30s and 40s. The Star-Tribune is now offering subscriptions to their entire keyword-searchable archive, and your editor is finding all sorts of interesting material.



Dame Fashion
rides the
Street Cars...

This very distinguished and venerable dame, who down through the ages has dictated style, even as today—rides the street cars. . . . You will find her on almost any car, going in any direction at any time of the day. She is the woman shopper, seventy per cent of whom ride the street cars.

Excess capacity	\$1,084,700.00
Maintenance and supplies	\$221,000.00
Taxes	\$1,000,000.00
Interest on bonds	\$1,000,000.00
Total	\$3,285,700.00

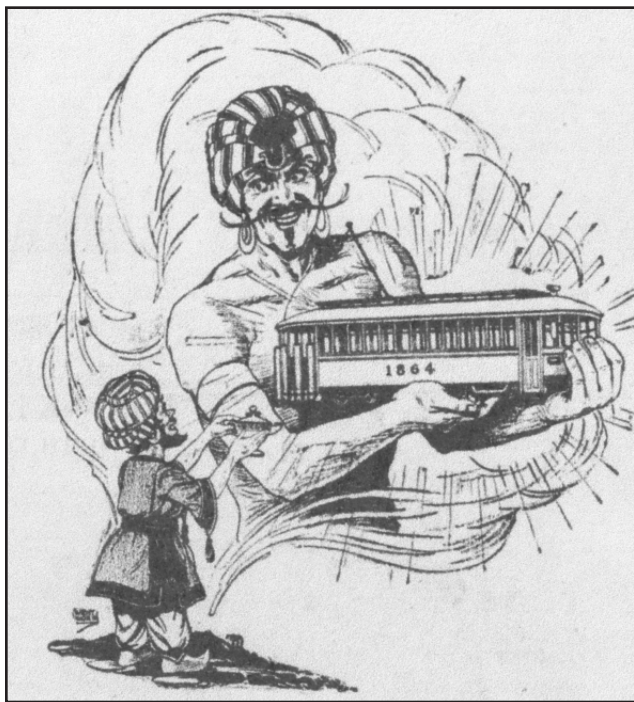


Waiting to
Take You
Home

ONE MINUTE SERVICE
—TO THE—
FAIR GROUNDS



"Are those children
alone?"
"Where could they be
safer?"







CLUTTERED desk and noisy, dusty streets fade out of memory quickly under the spell of the water when you ride a Lake Minnetonka steamboat.

Three big steamboats make excursion trips from Excelsior Park docks Saturday and Sunday afternoons and evenings. Moonlight excursions begin at 8 P. M.

Street cars take you to the park gates, where you will find amusements of every kind in addition to the boat ride.

Twin City Lines




the COOLEST
place on the Street
is in a STREET CAR
It's Breeze Conditioned -- RIDE



TWIN CITY LINES

ZERO

WEATHER BRINGS
ON THE "SNIFFLES"
HEAT CONDITIONED

STREET
CARS

Brings You
COMFORT
ECONOMY
CONVENIENCE





A Million Dollar Appearance

T

HE degree of a city's prosperity and civic pride can be gauged by the appearance of its street cars. In point of physical attractiveness and cleanliness Twin City Line cars are second to none in the country.



Above: 1970--the newly laid track still needed ballast and alignment.

Right: On June 9, 1971 streetcar 1300 was moved from the Minnesota Transfer roundhouse in St. Paul to Lake Harriet.





This was the end of track in 1971.



Top: The track across 42nd Street was laid on July 17-18, 1971.

Below left: For the first two years car 1300 was powered by the "goat" generator on a and car. Overhead wire was erected in 1973.

Below right: George Isaacs and Judy Sandberg break a champagne bottle across 1300's fender to commemorate the start of public operations on August 28, 1971.





The ceremonial first trip crosses 42nd Street on August 28, 1971.



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

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